

# ST HELENS BOROUGH

# LOCAL PLAN UP TO 2037

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - JULY 2022



ST HELENS  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



 #STHELENSTOGETHER





# A BALANCED PLAN FOR A BETTER FUTURE

We want St Helens to be a vibrant, attractive, and prosperous borough. We want local people to benefit from a good choice of quality and affordable homes, skilled local jobs, efficient infrastructure, beautiful open green spaces, good transport links and better health and wellbeing.

Our new local plan sets out our ambitions to achieve this over the next 15 years up to 2037. While we must deliver a local plan that accounts for the growth in employment and housing demand that we know there is, we will be sensitive and balanced in how we deliver that plan. A balanced plan is one that looks at our existing needs together with our future development plans,

and strikes a balance between growth, prosperity and quality of life for our residents. We will continue to look for opportunities to regenerate brownfield land and bring it back into use, fighting for government and regional funding as we have done recently in bidding for Liverpool City Region funding to transform the Moss Nook and Cowley Hill sites.

Our plan ensures that we have the necessary infrastructure such as schools, doctors' surgeries, and highways to support new development. And our plan will also protect and enhance our natural environment, protecting 59% of our borough as greenbelt, and in addition our many beautiful parks and open green spaces.



# FIVE KEY PRIORITIES FOR A BALANCED LOCAL PLAN

We've developed a balanced plan for a better borough, with five key priorities that guided our approach.

## 1

### SUPPORTING A GROWING POPULATION AND STRONG ECONOMY

Our plan will help support economic growth and create better job opportunities for local people. This is more important than ever post-Covid.

It will aim to provide enough homes for local people now and in the future and attract new people to come and live here.

It will also help young people access jobs and affordable homes as near to their own communities as possible.

## 2

### CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO BROWNFIELD FIRST

This plan ensures that 59% of our Borough will remain as greenbelt. We are prioritising development on brownfield sites and we are working with the city region to make challenging sites financially viable.

## 3

### REGENERATING OUR TOWN AND DISTRICT CENTRES

Working with English Cities Fund and our Town Deal Board our Local Plan will support and enhance our vision to regenerate St Helens and Earlestown Town Centres and support our businesses in a post Covid-19 economy. It will also support our commitment to bring back into public use our civic buildings such as Earlestown Town Hall and The Gamble Building.

## 4

### PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR OPEN GREEN SPACES

Our local plan will help us to tackle the climate emergency. It will protect 952 hectares of public parks and green spaces, our Local Plan seeks to enhance, expand and connect these spaces. It protects areas of importance for St Helens environment, ecology and heritage and where there are unavoidable impacts, it requires that development provides extensive mitigation. It also supports our commitment to tackling the climate emergency.

## 5

### INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT

We know local people are concerned about the impact of housing numbers on infrastructure and traffic. We are committed to ensuring that where an area sees growth and development, it will be accompanied by investment in the appropriate infrastructure, with greater community benefits such as improved roads, highways and schools.



# WHY DO WE NEED A NEW LOCAL PLAN?

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St Helens Borough must have a Local Plan to show the vision for future development in our borough.

Every area in England and Wales should have an up-to-date Local Plan in place and review it at least every five years. It gives local residents some certainty about our development plans and future use of land in the borough.

It shows where development is planned, and therefore where resources and possible additional infrastructure such as roads, or new schools, are needed to support it.

It prevents decisions being made on developments which may not be in the best interests of our local community, but most importantly it sets out our ambitions to create jobs, build homes, shape infrastructure investments, create and protect our open green spaces and develops our town and district centres. All the things that matter to you, and to us too.



# ADOPTING THE LOCAL PLAN - WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The Local Plan Submission Draft (2019) was submitted to the Secretary of State in October 2020 for independent Examination. Two Planning Inspectors were appointed to undertake the examination and public hearing sessions were held in May and June 2021.

After considering significant amounts of evidence, both written and verbal, and presented by a variety of parties, the Inspectors advised the council of the main modifications required to make the plan 'sound' in accordance with national policy. The identification of main modifications is a routine and normal part of the examination process. A public consultation on these proposed main modifications was then held between November 2021 and January 2022.

Following consideration of the consultation responses, the Inspectors have now issued their final report into the Local Plan examination together with the final main modifications that the Inspectors required to be made to the plan. The main modifications do not fundamentally alter the plan, the key elements of it still remain the same. As a result of their detailed consideration and testing of the plan and keeping in mind all the representations made and evidence before them, the Inspectors concluded ...

"with the recommended main modifications... St Helens Borough Local Plan satisfies the requirements referred to in Section 20(5)(a) of the 2004 Act and is sound."

The Local Plan has now been updated to reflect all the Inspectors recommended main modifications and so is now considered sound.

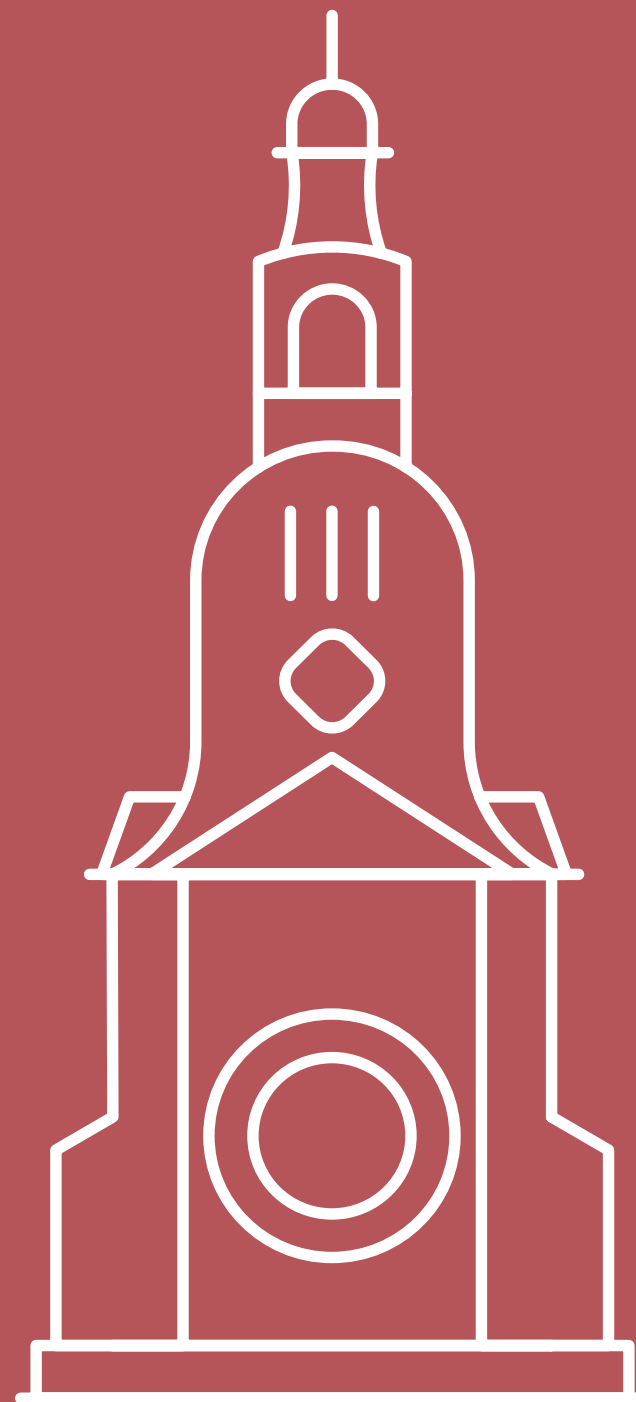
All details on St Helens Borough Local Plan, including details on the main modifications and the Inspectors report can be found on the council website; <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/3490/Local-Plan-examination-news>.

# WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Local Plan has now gone before Members of St Helens Borough Council Cabinet and was approved at its meeting on 30th June 2022.

The Local Plan will now progress to a full Council meeting on Tuesday 12th July for final adoption.

Once adopted by Council the St Helens Borough Local Plan process will be complete and the plan will have statutory status as part of the development plan for the borough, against which planning applications are considered.







# OUR COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN INVOLVED EVERY STEP OF THE WAY...

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We have carried out extensive consultation with residents, local communities, businesses, and other stakeholders. This involved four public consultations, including;

- an initial consultation on the scope of the plan in 2016
- the Preferred Options version of the plan in 2016/2017
- the Submission Draft version of the plan in 2019
- and the Main Modifications to the plan in 2021/22

In addition, local people were also invited by the independent Inspectors to make representations at the public inquiry held in 2021, based on comments made previously. At all stages, consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the full details of how these consultations have been undertaken is available on the Local Plan page on the council website.

The Inspectors considered the consultation undertaken by the council during the preparation of the Plan, and concluded in their report .....

"the consultation and engagement methods which included drop-in sessions, appear to have been effective .... Consultation has exceeded the requirements of the regulations."



# LEVELLING UP AND THE REGENERATION BILL

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The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill was unveiled in the Queen's Speech in May 2022.

It has a range of implications for the planning system, including the introduction of 'new national development management policies', potential provision of a system for street referendums to allow residents of a street to propose development and then determine by a vote whether that development should be given planning permission, the introduction of an Infrastructure Levy, and the requirement for all local planning authorities to have a design code in place covering their entire area, amongst many other proposals.

The Bill is in the very early stages of its progress towards enactment. Therefore, it will likely undergo change to its content as it progresses, and it will be some time before it comes into force. Notwithstanding this, there is nothing in the content of the Bill currently that suggests conflict with adopting the Local Plan. Indeed, the Government remains of the view that Councils should continue to progress plans towards adoption without delay.

While the Bill progresses, it remains critical that the Council has an up-to-date planning policy framework in place, in the form of a new Local Plan. This will ensure the Council is in the best possible position to deliver and shape the identified growth needs of the Borough in the most sustainable way, whilst protecting against inappropriate development.

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# WHAT IS SAFEGUARDED LAND?

Safeguarded land is a government term for land which would be removed from the Green Belt and 'safeguarded' for potential future development.

Under the terms of the current plan this would mean after 2037.

The plan states (in policy LPA05) that "planning permission for the development of the safeguarded sites will only be granted following a future Local Plan review that proposes such development."

That review would also have to allocate the land for development.



# SUPPORTING A GROWING POPULATION



486

NEW HOMES BUILT PER YEAR

7,132

TO BE BUILT BETWEEN 2021-2037

5,670

NEW HOMES TO BE BUILT ON  
URBAN/BROWNFIELD SITES UP TO

2037

Our population in St Helens Borough is growing and we want our economy to thrive.

We need to respond to this and support future growth by making sure that we have enough homes for local people now and in the future.

We need to make sure our residents, and in particular young people in our borough, have access to affordable housing. We will take every step possible to encourage and provide affordable housing across the borough, including by setting a minimum target of 30% affordable homes for all developments on greenfield sites.

UP TO

30%

OF ALL NEW HOMES ON GREENFIELD  
SITES TO BE AFFORDABLE HOMES

20%

OF ALL NEW HOMES ON GREENFIELD  
SITES TO BE ACCESSIBLE HOMES

It's also vital we meet the needs of an ageing population and those with vulnerabilities. That's why our plan sets a target for 20% of homes to be built to an accessible and adaptable standard.

We will continue to work closely with housing associations and private developers to make affordable, specialised and supported housing available right across our borough.

The population of St Helens borough is expected to grow by at least 10,000 to 2037, and we want to do all we can to attract people from outside the borough to come and live here.

Our projections highlight the need to build 486 new homes a year to support future job growth in the borough and provide sufficient homes for our growing population. This is a minimum. Starting now and continuing over the next 15 years to 2037, we require an additional 7,132 new homes.

The minimum number of new homes we need exceeds the amount of urban and brownfield land available in St Helens. As the borough has grown, the reality is that our urban areas are nearing their development capacity. We've undertaken an extensive search of all urban and brownfield development options; this has shown that it is possible to deliver around 5,670 new homes in existing brownfield and urban land up to 2037. This means that the remainder of land for housing and employment would need to be released from the Green Belt.

Releasing land from the Green Belt for housing and employment needs is a last resort and we will always take a brownfield first approach whenever possible.



**"I'VE BEEN  
BLESSED WITH  
A BRAND-NEW  
HOME WHERE I  
CAN FEEL SAFE  
AND SECURE"**

## CASE STUDY: HELPING PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

St Helens Borough Council granted planning permission for a two-storey residential development on Crab Street, St Helens.

The brownfield site had originally been the site of the Traveller's Rest pub before becoming a builder's yard. Now newly built, Gorsuch House has 61 apartments for over 55's, managed by growth and regeneration group Torus.

Kevin, a 59-year-old frontline Nurse, recently received the keys to his own apartment in Gorsuch House;

"After going through a divorce, I found myself with just my motorbike and two bin bags to my name. I moved to live closer to my adult children, but despite working as a Registered General Nurse, the only place I could afford to move into was a shared house with four strangers.

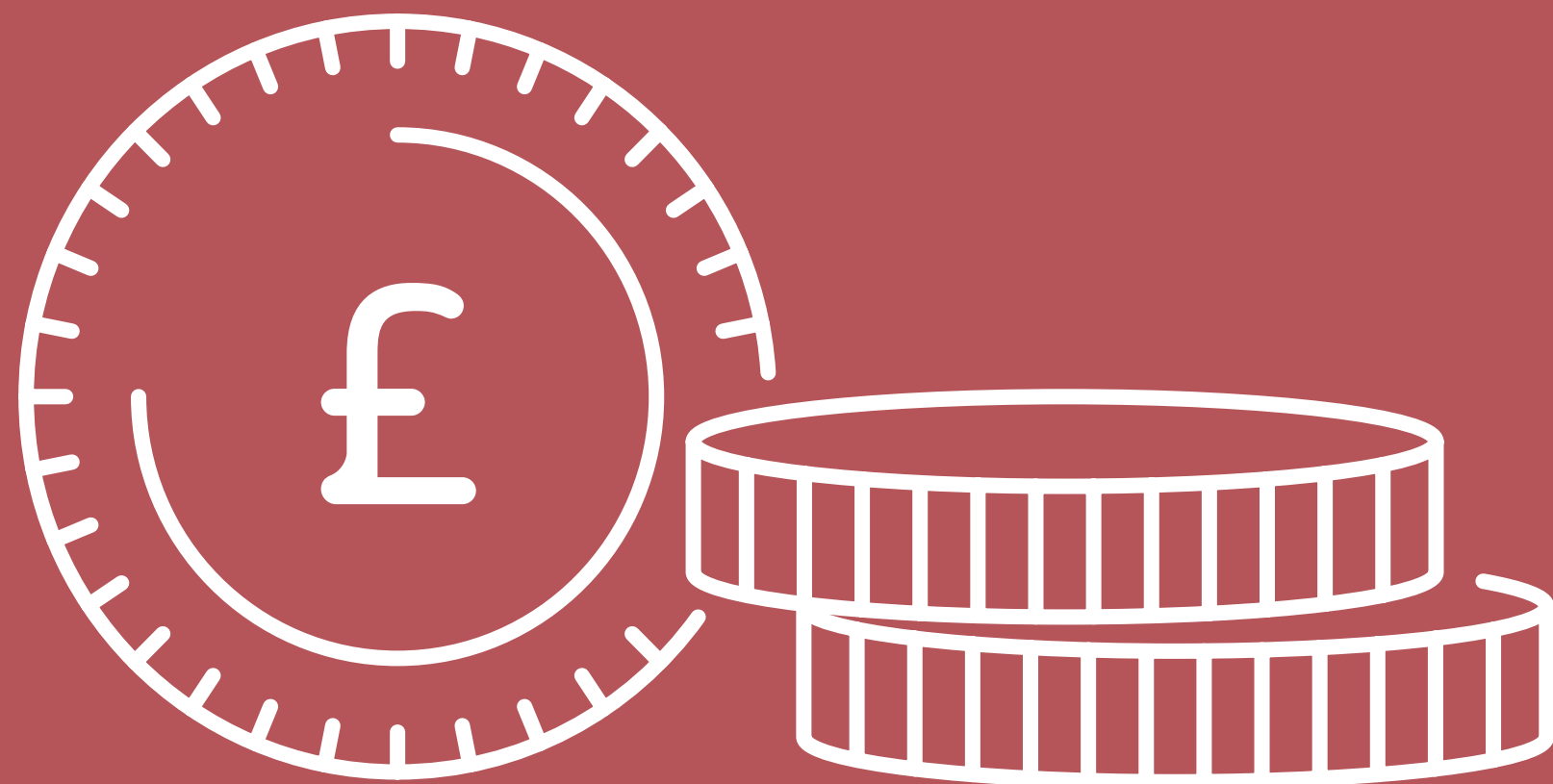
I was one of the unfortunate ones to actually catch Covid-19 and being in a shared home was not

a great place to be during that time. My daughter encouraged me to sign up to Under One Roof for an affordable rent property. I really didn't hold out much hope of being offered somewhere, but Torus has prioritised homes for the older generation.

It's completely changed my life. I picked up my keys this week and I feel like a young man moving into his first home, I'm that excited! After getting coronavirus and thinking 'this is it', I've been blessed with a brand-new home where I can feel safe and secure."



# SUPPORTING A STRONG ECONOMY



We want to create an environment which allows our economy to thrive for the good of everyone who lives and works in our borough.

As part of the wider Liverpool City Region (LCR), we work closely together with the LCR Combined Authority to strengthen our local economy, promote business growth, increase employment and apprenticeship opportunities and reduce the number of people not in work.

Specific locations beside the M6 and M62 motorways are particularly attractive for large scale development especially for companies within the logistics and distribution sector. But to enable us to capitalise on these advantages and to realise the benefits that growth and development can bring we need to release land for employment use in key locations from the Green Belt.


St Helens is the 9th most employment deprived local authority out of 317 in England. St Helens needs more job opportunities. There are 0.63 jobs per resident aged 16-64 in St Helens, below the England average of 0.85. Our business density of 326 businesses per 10,000 residents is one of the lowest in England, significantly lower than the England average of 492 businesses per 10,000 residents, and the second lowest in the Liverpool City Region. This is too low and may indicate a lack of resilience to an economic shock that could force a significant proportion of businesses to close – such as the Covid 19 pandemic.

Youth unemployment in St Helens stands at 13.9%, for those aged 20-24 years compared to an England average of 9.7%. The release of employment land will allow us to meet the boroughs need for economic growth and create more job opportunities to bring more local people of working age back into employment and offer a greater choice to the existing workforce.

It will also give our young people an opportunity to access employment on their own doorstep and will help stem the increasing numbers of young people who move away from the area in search of employment.

The creation of jobs also reduces the amount of people dependent on claiming benefits within the borough, as well as generally increasing the amount of money in the local economy. This in turn can support local businesses, retailers and service providers, and so further aid the creation of more jobs locally.





**“THIS MARKS  
THE START OF  
A NEW DAWN IN  
THE BOROUGH’S  
JOURNEY”**

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## **CASE STUDY: AWARD WINNING INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE ACCOMMODATION AT MERE GRANGE**

Mere Grange is a mixed-use site comprising of industrial, office and residential developments.

The 30-acre site adjacent to the St Helens Linkway has been a significant project with over 10 years of construction activity on the site. The developer, Network Space, completed the third and final phase in recent years which saw the addition of 162,000 sq ft of new industrial warehousing development. The scheme has been developed in association with Network Space, Homes England, St Helens Borough Council and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

Phase one had seen the £7m development of mainly office workspace and the creation of 154 new jobs. Phase two involved the development of over 149,000 sq ft of industrial space creating around 60 new jobs and bringing £13.9m of investment into the area.

The addition of phase three now brings the site up to 75% capacity, with a commercial laundry for the healthcare industry taking a 25-year lease and an electrical switchgear manufacturer taking a 15-year lease, joining the list of high calibre national and international tenants taking up residency. The two remaining units left on the site are also receiving strong interest.

Councillor Richard McCauley, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Housing said, “Mere Grange has been a significant project delivering over 162,000 sq ft of top-class, award-winning industrial space, and hundreds of jobs, for decades to come. This marks the start of a new dawn in the borough’s journey to drive forward growth across our borough.”



**“WE’VE GOT  
BIG PLANS  
FOR OUR NEW  
ST HELENS  
FACILITY AS  
WE EXPAND  
ACROSS  
THE NORTH”**

## CASE STUDY: MANUFACTURER’S INVESTMENT IS A GOOD SIGN FOR ST HELENS

Leeds based digital and traditional signage specialists, Widdsigns, moved to St Helens in 2020 after completing the takeover of Spectrum Sign & Display Ltd, safeguarding jobs and adding further scope for significant job creation over the next few years.

The 132-year-old company provides signage consultancy, design and production to a number of high-profile businesses including Marks & Spencers, Primark and Schuh as well as the National Science and Media Museum and Burnley FC.

The acquisition of its new 20,000 sq ft site in Sutton was supported by St Helens Borough Council, who actively assisted Widdsigns with the recruitment of local people to help fill a number of vacant positions. The company has already invested £50,000 in upgrading plant and equipment at the new site.

The move is being heralded as a real positive sign for St Helens and demonstrates that the borough is being seen as the place to be for economic activity, especially when it comes to industries such as manufacturing.

Phil Bamford, Head of Operations at Widd Signs, said;

“We’ve got big plans for our new St Helens facility as we expand across the north, acquiring the St Helens firm will support our business growth over the next few years. We’re looking forward to building on the important and valuable relationship we already have St Helens Borough Council over the coming months and years.”



# CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO BROWNFIELD FIRST APPROACH

59%

OF LAND IN ST HELENS BOROUGH  
WILL REMAIN GREEN BELT BY 2037

APPROXIMATELY

73%

OF NEW BUILD HOMES WILL BE  
ON BROWNFIELD/URBAN SITES  
BETWEEN 2021-2037

St Helens is Merseyside's greenest borough, and it will stay that way.

At the end of the plan period in 2037, St Helens Borough will still have over half - 59% - of land designated as Green Belt. We will still have the highest proportion of rural and semirural Green Belt land in the Merseyside region and we should be very proud of this fact.

This is in addition to open and green spaces such as parks, recreational grounds, allotments etc, which are greatly valued by us all.

Adoption of the plan would see around 890 hectares released from the Green Belt, signalling the first time that the Green Belt in the borough has been significantly altered since it was designated in 1983.

Of new homes to be built, approximately 73% between 2021 and 2037 will be built on brownfield and urban sites, but there are insufficient numbers of these sites to accommodate all our housing and employment needs up to 2037. This will mean that some release of Green Belt land, both for employment uses and new housing is needed.

However, we will ensure that the contribution from brownfield land in existing urban areas is maximised and will maintain a "brownfield first" a

Moss Nook is a prime example of how a brownfield site can be developed. With a history of mining and other industrial processes, the land was scarred, contaminated and had been abandoned for many years. However, a £2 million investment from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has now meant that the site, situated between Sutton, Parr and Bold, will now see an initial development of approximately 250 homes in the first phase with the potential for up to 900 homes as well as community sports pitches in future phases. Remediation work has already started on the land, and it is hoped the first homes will be built and occupied in 2022, with the site likely to be under construction still by the end of the plan period, ie. 2037.

In preparing the plan, we have sought to maximise the amount of land in urban areas to be developed, most of which is brownfield, although not all of this land will be suitable for housing, for example if they are situated next to noisy industrial units. St Helens also has a heritage of heavy industry including coal mining, glass making and chemical works, meaning the land is often heavily contaminated making it difficult and costly to remediate. We are however, doing all we can to progress and bring forward the development of brownfield land. We generally place less onerous requirements on developers of brownfield sites in order to encourage brownfield development. We also work pro-actively with developers, owners and registered providers of housing to ensure we maximise urban regeneration, as well as continuing to maintain a public register of all brownfield sites which are suitable for housing development.



“A SITE WHICH  
IN TOTAL COULD  
HOUSE 630  
HOMES OVER  
A NUMBER OF  
PHASES”

## CASE STUDY: TRANSFORMING A FORMER FOUNDRY INTO A HIGH-QUALITY URBAN VILLAGE

The Vulcan Works Foundry produced locomotives and diesel engines, even tanks during WWII, that were exported all over the world, before finally closing its doors after 150 years in 2002.

As well as the foundry, Vulcan Village was built in the 1830's, to house the foundry's workers. In the 1940's a sports ground with running track, tennis courts, bowling greens, football and rugby pitches and an indoor rifle range were added.

When the works closed. The foundry land complete with sports ground was bought by housing developers, St Modwen, who set about the transformation of a derelict brownfield site into an urban village of high-quality homes alongside Persimmon Homes and Jones Homes.

Having seen a century and a half of heavy industry the land was contaminated and required extensive remediation.

In 2007, planning permission was granted on a site which in total could house 630 homes over a number of phases.

Fast forward 15 years and the developers are completing the final phase of 89 homes. The council also ensured the sporting facilities that were on the original site where not only replaced but received a full upgrade.

As part of the redevelopment of Vulcan Works, Vulcan bowling, rifle and football clubs we relocated to a new top of the range £2million multi-purpose sports facility. As part of the planning consent a further £100,000 was received for greenway improvements.





# REGENERATING OUR TOWN AND DISTRICT CENTRES

St Helens Borough Council is committed to pushing forward with its vision of regenerating our borough, with our town centres in St Helens and Earlestown a priority.

To help in making this vision a reality the council has joined in partnership with English Cities Fund (ECF) – a joint venture between Muse Developments, Homes England and Legal and General, to progress the plans to develop both town centres as well as other regeneration opportunities across the borough.



Following a public consultation on proposals to transform both town centres, planning applications have been submitted for Phase 1 of the development which, if approved, will see in St Helens town centre the delivery of high-grade office space, a hotel, a new market hall, town centre living including townhouses and apartments, retail space and redevelopment of public spaces.

In Earlestown the outline planning application focuses on the transformation of the central market square with a new market hall canopy, together with wider public realm improvements to key high streets.

In addition to the partnership working with ECF, the local plan is also supporting the £25m Town Deal Fund including the reclamation and repurposing of 10 acres of brownfield land and the delivery of 99 homes and 73,000 sq ft of commercial space, a second phase of Glass Futures including a 107,000 sq ft centre of excellence and the development of a visitor centre, a new state of the art bus station and a reimagined World of Glass experience including a new park and public realm area.

The Local Plan is also supporting our ambitions regarding the regeneration of our civil buildings in both St Helens and Earlestown town centres. External works totalling £1.37m on the restoration of the Gamble building in St Helens town centre are due to be completed in Summer 2022, while plans are being considered for how the interior space will be utilised. External works have also been on going on Earlestown Town Hall with work due to complete in Autumn 2022.





“IT’S IMPORTANT  
THAT LOCAL  
BUSINESSES  
ARE INVOLVED”

#### CASE STUDY: LOCAL BUSINESSES HELPING TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF OUR TOWN

OD's Designer Clothing, are a multi-channel retailer of designer clothing for men, women and children, as well as watches and jewellery, based in St Helen Town Centre. OD's, which was founded 30 years ago by owner Chris O'Dea, is a St Helens success story, with the business going from strength to strength.

The men's store has been extended to allow for expansion of office space to support the increase in the online side of the business.

Chris is a proactive advocate for the borough, both regionally and nationally, as well as being a Town Deal member:

“I felt very honoured and privileged to be asked to join the Town Deal Board, and this together with my role as an Ambassador I take very seriously. It's important that local businesses are involved in helping to shape the vision for our town centre, and that they have a voice which can have a positive impact on the future plans for our town centre.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, to help deliver what the people of St Helens want and deserve. We must be brave in our approach and innovative in our thinking and strive to make St Helens the envy of towns across the region and the country.

To make this happen we need to engage with local people of all ages, grow and develop our food and drink offer, digitalise our high street, bring more residential and green spaces into the town and give people a reason to come in and stay for a while in our town.

This in return will encourage businesses and people to want to work, live and socialise here.

We are on the cusp of massive change, but to make this happen we must work in collaboration to unlock the funding that is crucial to our town's success.

I know my colleagues on the Town Deal Board are as dedicated to this as I am and making this a reality is our ultimate goal.”



# PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OPEN AND GREEN SPACE

Open and green spaces make an important contribution to our overall quality of life. They provide a place to relax, play, meet friends and family, exercise and enjoy the flora and fauna. They also act to improve the visual attractiveness of where we live and work and help to define the character of our borough.

APPROXIMATELY

# 1,744

HECTARES OF ACCESSIBLE OPEN GREEN SPACE IN ST HELENS BOROUGH

Across St Helens Borough there is approximately 1,744 hectares of open spaces, including those in the urban areas and accessible open spaces within the Green Belt, from formal parks and gardens to playing fields, from nature reserves to children's play areas. These make up over 10% of the borough.

The local plan aims to protect, manage, enhance and where appropriate expand on all types of open and green space and looks to employ strategies to further enhance and protect them through the use of awards and standards such as the Green Flag status awarded to Victoria Park and the recognition of all 18 woodlands across the borough meeting the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.

The plan also supports reclamation and improvement projects such as the Bold Forest Park and Sankey Valley Park.

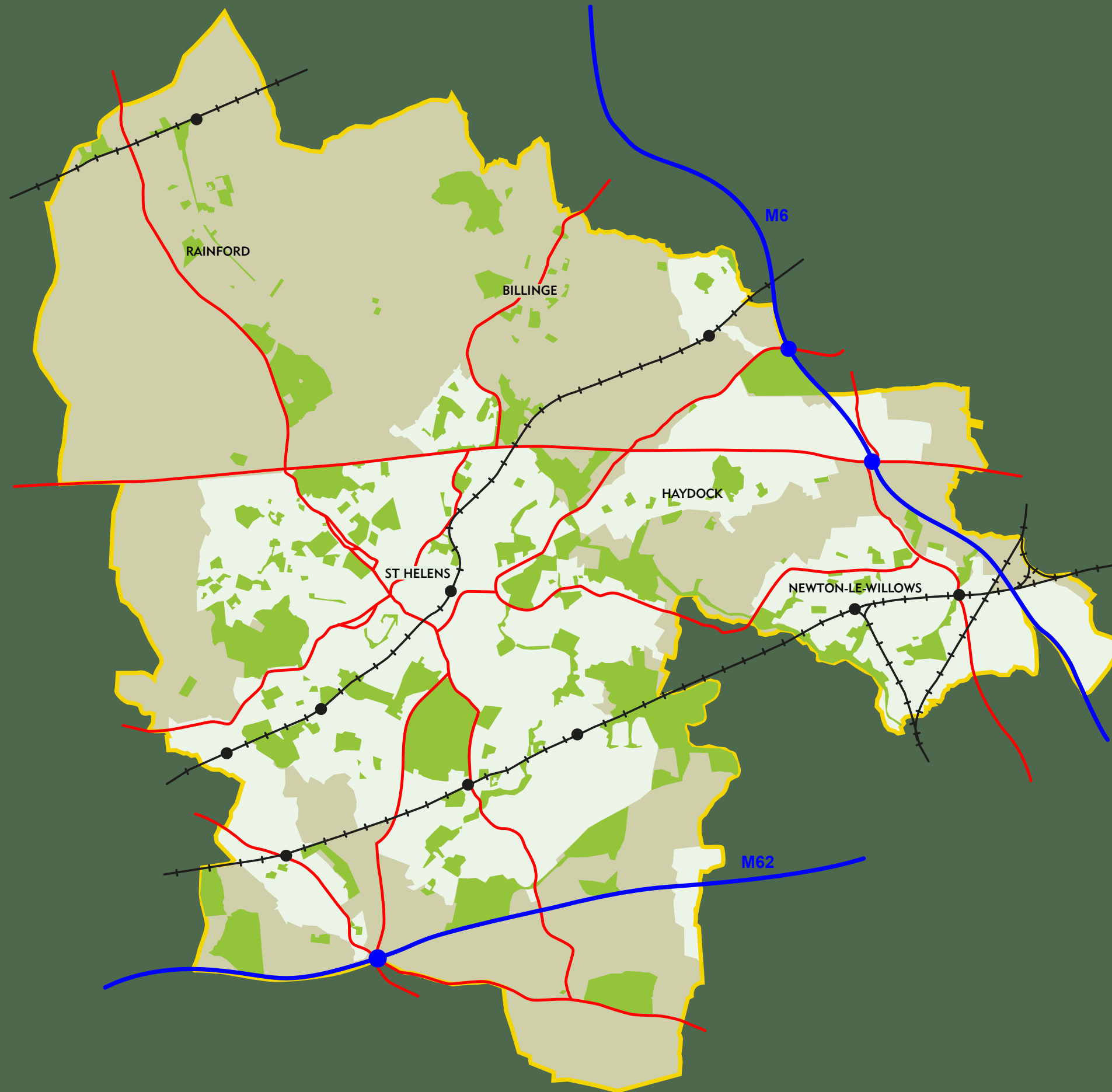









# PLAN OF GREEN BELT AND OTHER GREEN SPACES ACROSS ST HELENS BOROUGH

When looking at all the Green Belt and accessible other green spaces across the borough, when combined, this space accounts for approximately 64% of the borough.

The below map show this in more detail.



## INFRASTRUCTURE

-  GREEN BELT
-  OPEN SPACE AND OUTDOOR SPORTS & RECREATION FACILITIES
-  BOROUGH BOUNDARY
-  MOTORWAY JUNCTION
-  MOTORWAY
-  A ROAD
-  RAILWAYS
-  RAILWAY STATION



# “A DIVERSE RANGE OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES”

## CASE STUDY: A GREEN OASIS FOR WALKERS, CYCLISTS AND FAMILIES

For nearly three decades, The Mersey Forest has brought together a range of partners to transform an area of St Helens previously dominated by colliery spoil heaps into a burgeoning Forest Park and natural asset.

St Helens has faced significant social, economic and environmental challenges since the demise of the local coal mining industry.

However, the creation of a cluster of community woodlands spanning 220 hectares, including Sutton Manor, Clock Face Country Park and Griffin Wood, has dramatically improved the image of the area and offers a future source of economic development.

Landowners are working together with the local community as part of The Mersey Forest to harness the collective potential of the maturing woodlands under the banner of Bold Forest Park.

The woodlands are already proving a popular local resource, attracting 200,000 visitors per year. In an area where health and wellbeing are important considerations, the Forest Park provides a valuable space for walkers, cyclists and families.

The ambition is to now develop it to attract visitors from further afield – in turn helping to support local businesses. Working together with the local community, St Helens Borough Council has created a formal area action plan for the Forest Park, using neighbourhood planning principles.

Whilst the area has already been transformed, additional funding will help to further deliver the action plan to increase green spaces for recreation, improve access and create visitor infrastructure.

The vision for the Forest Park is to provide a high-quality setting to stimulate tourism and provide a platform for local businesses to grow and develop, as well as assisting the creation of new businesses. The area will also provide opportunity for a diverse range of outdoor activities to support the local economy and improve the health and wellbeing of its local residents.

Bold Forest Park © McCoy Wynne





**“WE ARE  
COMMITTED  
TO IMPROVING  
CYCLING AND  
WALKING  
ROUTES”**

## CASE STUDY: COMMITMENT TO IMPROVE CYCLING AND WALKING ROUTES

We are committed to improving walking and cycling routes right across our borough. Walking and cycling are good for our health, the planet and make economic sense. Recent polling shows that majority of residents would like to see greater investment in walking, cycling and public transport. One third of residents say they do not currently cycle but would like to, and residents have told us that wider pavements, better crossings, quieter streets and protected cycle routes are some of the main factors which would help them to walk, wheel or cycle more.

Our Local Plan supports the development and enhancement of our growing network. Later in the

year we will be publishing our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for the borough, a strategic plan setting out a future network which will help to make it safer and easier for everyone who lives or works in our borough to walk and cycle more for local journeys.

The Local Plan builds on the success of recent enhancements such as along the Sankey Valley and on key roads in Marshall's Cross and Sutton Manor, creating opportunities for new routes providing sustainable connectivity to major employment opportunities such as Omega Business Park and to leisure, shopping and community hubs such as regenerated town centres in St Helens and Earlestown.

Recent funding secured by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority provides an opportunity for multimillion pound investment in our active and sustainable transport infrastructure across the borough, with the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement alone securing £710m over the next five years. The Local Plan provides a framework to ensure this investment is targeted in the right places, helping our borough to grow in a sustainable, equitable way.



# PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

Our plan protects areas of importance for our borough's environment, ecology and heritage and where there are unavoidable impacts, the plan will require that development provides extensive mitigation.

It will ensure that where new housing development would result in a loss of open space or destruction of trees, woodlands and hedgerows that these will wherever possible be replaced by new, expanded or enhanced open green space with additional trees planted.

Our plan supports the council's climate change emergency, and has been further strengthened by the Planning Inspectors via the main modifications in providing compensatory measures in the remaining Green Belt to mitigate Green Belt release elsewhere. The plan will ensure all new developments are designed to reduce carbon emissions and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, as well as increasing cycle and walking routes to reduce car use, increase electric vehicle charging points, manage flood risks and work with the Mersey Forest and others to increase the numbers of trees, woodlands and hedgerows across the borough.





“OVER THE LAST  
DECADE THE  
DEVELOPMENT  
HAS SEEN  
AROUND 600  
HOMES BUILT”

## CASE STUDY: RETAINING AND ENHANCING OUR GREEN OPEN SPACE

An English garden theme, tree lined boulevards, a village green and a series of natural water features, all make Waterside Village off Lowfield Lane, St Helens a very visually appealing, quality housing development. But that wasn't always the case.

The land the development is built on was the former Lea Green Colliery, which closed in 1964.

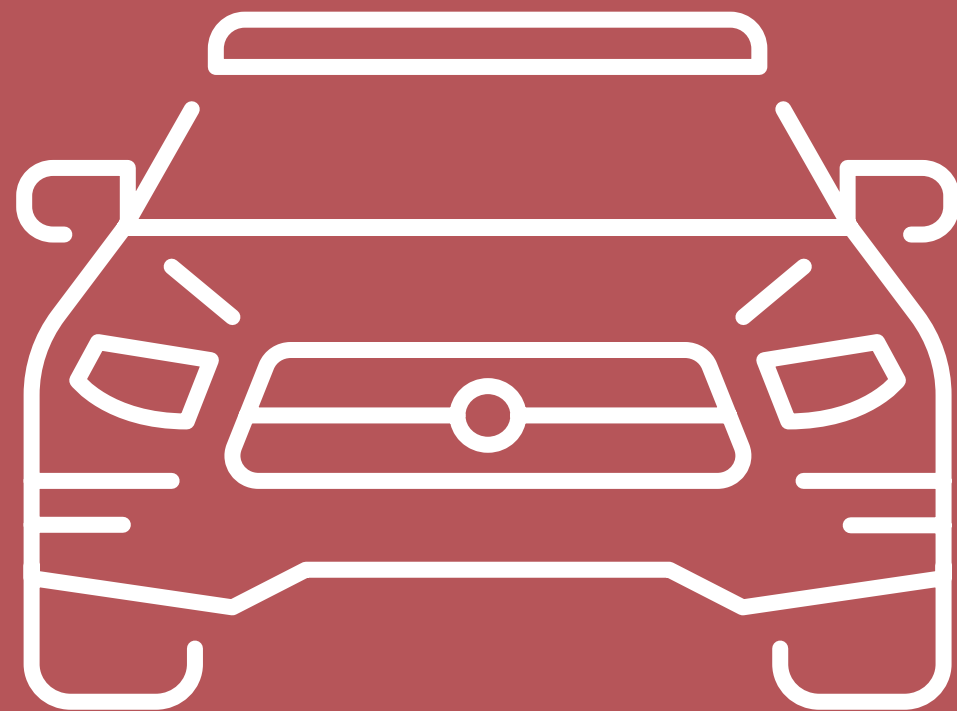
The land lay mainly derelict for decades, until in 2005 St Helens Borough Council granted outline planning permission for an urban village development.

The land was heavily contaminated, and an extensive clean-up of the site was required. Surrounding woodland was retained, and significant landscaping works and tree planting were carried out by the developer to create its English garden theme.

Over the last decade the development has seen around 600 homes built, and construction of the site is now close to being complete.



# INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT



We recognise residents' concerns about infrastructure.

We also recognise that in order for us to build sustainable communities, the provision of high-quality infrastructure to support existing and future development is essential.

Increased development and investment in infrastructure will go hand in hand - one will not happen without the other.

Areas that see growth and development will see wider community benefits such as improved roads, highways and schools. We also need to bring forward development in a way which makes it easier for people to make sustainable travel choices.

## £710M

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS.

An effective transport infrastructure is also needed to support a strong economy and a growing community.

The plan will support the transport network to facilitate economic growth, enable good levels of accessibility between homes, jobs and services, improve air quality and minimise carbon emissions.

It ensures that new development is located where it can be accessed by a full range of sustainable transport modes including cycling, walking, public transport and car, and also supports any improvements and upgrades to these transport networks. Within the plan, priority is given to transport links between homes and workplaces to ensure new jobs are as accessible as possible to local people.

The plan also supports the development of key transport infrastructure such as the work to improve the A580 (East Lancs).

Transport improvements within a regenerated St Helens Town Centre, including a new bus interchange, and sustainable transport improvements surrounding key brownfield allocations, have all been identified as priorities for multi-million-pound development funding by the Liverpool City Region. To support the plan, we will be making significant investments throughout the plan period to make our borough better connected to boost economic growth and employment opportunities, as well as making journeys quicker, safer and cleaner.



# "AREAS THAT SEE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WILL SEE WIDER COMMUNITY BENEFITS"

## CASE STUDY: IMPROVING TRANSPORT LINKS AND SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Newton le Willows train station is the second most popular station on the busy Liverpool to Manchester line.

So, to help local people access better links between local, regional and national transport and to support economic growth, St Helens Borough Council approved planning permission on a £18m revamp of the station and surrounding facilities.

This included;

- Step free access to and between the platform with a new subway and lifts
- A bus interchange
- A new ticket office
- 400 space car park and drop on/off area
- Improved passenger waiting facilities
- Cycle access and storage

The improvements were funded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Growth Fund, Merseytravel and St Helens Borough Council.

The new station will play a crucial part in supporting potential future plans for the development of nearby former Parkside Colliery into a 1 million sq ft industrial and logistics park, providing an estimated 1,330 jobs.





# FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE ST HELENS BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN UP TO 2037

For further information and to read the full version of the St Helens Borough Local Plan, please visit the St Helens Borough Council website on:

[www.sthelens.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/localplan)

All supporting documentation for the Local Plan and up-to-date Frequently Asked Questions are also available.



ST HELENS  
BOROUGH COUNCIL